

I Claim:

1. A cover for selectively covering a drinking opening in beverage container assembly, where the beverage container assembly comprises a cup and a lid and the drinking opening is formed in an upper wall of the raised portion of the lid, the cover comprising:
 - a substantially planar cover member comprising first and second layers and defining a cover portion, a surrounding cover portion, a tab portion, and a perimeter edge; wherein
 - the first layer is a structural layer having flexural characteristics that allow the cover member to be transported by engaging opposing portions of the perimeter edge of the cover member without substantially deforming the cover member;
 - the second layer defines an adhesive surface adapted to detachably attach the cover member to the lid; whereby
 - the cover member is attached to the container assembly in a cover mode by engaging the opposing edge portions of the cover member and bringing the surrounding cover portion of the cover member into contact with the upper wall of the raised portion of the lid such that the adhesive surface on the surrounding cover portion of the cover member adheres to the lid, where
 - the surrounding cover portion extends completely around the drinking opening,
 - the cover portion extends over the drinking opening, and
 - at least a portion of the tab portion of the cover member extends into free space from the raised portion of the lid; and
- the cover is detached from the container assembly by applying deliberate manual force to the tab portion of the cover

member to overcome the adhesion of the second layer of the cover member to the lid.

2. A cover as recited in claim 1, in which the flexural
5 characteristics of the first layer of the cover member include a deflection value of substantially between 0.0 and 1.2 inches.

3. A cover as recited in claim 1, in which the flexural
10 characteristics of the first layer of the cover member include a deflection value of substantially between 0.2 and 0.8 inches.

4. A cover as recited in claim 1, in which:
the surrounding cover portion of the cover member comprises first,
second, third, and fourth portions;
15 the first and second portions are arranged on opposing sides of the cover portion;
the third and fourth portions are arranged on opposing sides of the cover portion;
the first and second portions of the surrounding cover portion
20 extend from the covering portion a first distance;
the third and fourth portions of the surrounding cover portion extend from the covering portion a second distance; and
the first distance is substantially less than the second distance.

5. A cover as recited in claim 1, in which the lid of the container
25 assembly further defines a positioning surface, wherein:
the perimeter edge of the cover member defines a first edge portion;

the first edge portion is arranged adjacent to the positioning surface to facilitate alignment of the covering portion of the cover member with the drinking opening.

5 6. A cover as recited in claim 1, in which the lid of the container assembly further defines a positioning surface, wherein:

the perimeter edge of the cover member defines a first edge portion;

10 the first edge portion is contoured to follow the positioning surface to facilitate alignment of the covering portion of the cover member with the drinking opening.

15 7. A cover as recited in claim 1, in which:
the perimeter edge of the cover member defines first and second portions arranged on opposing sides of the cover portion;
the first portion of the perimeter edge extends from the covering portion a first distance;
the second portion of the perimeter edge extends from the covering portion a second distance; and
20 the first distance is substantially less than the second distance.

25 8. A cover as recited in claim 7, in which the first edge portion is contoured to facilitate alignment of the covering portion of the cover member with the drinking opening.

9. A cover as recited in claim 7, in which the second edge portion is defined by the tab portion of the cover member.

30 10. A cover as recited in claim 1, in which the cover member is attached to the container assembly in a storage mode by engaging the

opposing edge portions of the cover member and bringing the cover portion and the surrounding cover portion of the cover member into contact with the upper wall of the raised portion of the lid such that the adhesive surface on the surrounding cover portion of the cover member adheres to the lid, where:

the cover portion and the surrounding cover portion are spaced from the drinking opening, and at least a portion of the tab portion of the cover member extends into free space from the raised portion of the lid.

11. A method of serving a beverage comprising the steps of: providing a beverage container assembly comprises a cup and a lid, where the lid comprises a raised portion comprising an upper wall and an alignment wall and defining a drinking opening;

providing a substantially planar cover member comprising first and second layers and defining a cover portion, a surrounding cover portion, a tab portion, and a perimeter edge, where the first layer is a structural layer having flexural

characteristics that allow the cover member to be transported by engaging opposing portions of the perimeter edge of the cover member without substantially deforming the cover member;

the second layer defines an adhesive surface adapted to detachably attach the cover member to the lid; whereby

attaching the cover member to the container assembly in a cover mode by engaging the opposing edge portions of the cover member and bringing the surrounding cover portion of the

cover member into contact with the upper wall of the raised portion of the lid such that the adhesive surface on the surrounding cover portion of the cover member adheres the cover member to the lid, 5 the surrounding cover portion extends completely around the drinking opening, the cover portion extends over the drinking opening, and at least a portion of the tab portion of the cover member extends into free space from the raised portion of the 10 lid; and applying deliberate manual force to the tab portion of the cover member to overcome the adhesion of the second layer of the cover member to the lid and thereby detach the cover from the container assembly to allow the beverage to be drunk 15 through the drinking opening.

12. A method as recited in claim 11, in which: the step of providing the cover member further comprises the step of forming a first edge portion of the perimeter edge; and 20 the step of attaching the cover member to the lid further comprises the step of arranging the first edge portion adjacent to the positioning surface to facilitate alignment of the covering portion of the cover member with the drinking opening.

13. A method as recited in claim 11, in which: the step of providing the cover member further comprises the step of forming a first edge portion of the perimeter edge; and 25 the step of attaching the cover member to the lid further comprises the step of contouring the first edge portion to follow the

positioning surface to facilitate alignment of the covering portion of the cover member with the drinking opening.

14. A method as recited in claim 11, further comprising the step
5 of attaching the cover member to the container assembly in a storage mode by engagin the opposing edge portions of the cover member and bringing the cover portion and the surrounding cover portion of the cover member into contact with the upper wall of the raised portion of the lid such that the adhesive surface on the surrounding cover portion of the
10 cover member adheres to the lid such that:

the cover portion and the surrounding cover portion are spaced from the drinking opening, and
at least a portion of the tab portion of the cover member extends into free space from the raised portion of the lid.

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15. A method as recited in claim 14, further comprising the step of re-attaching the cover member to the container assembly in the cover mode.

20 16. A method as recited in claim 11, in which the step of providing the cover member further comprises the steps of:
providing a substrate material; and
arranging a plurality of cover members on the substrate material;
and
25 removing one of the cover members from the substrate material.

17. A cover piece particularly adapted for use with a drinking container, to cover an opening of the drinking container by which a person can drink from the container, where said container has a lower end portion
30 and an upper end portion, and which comprises an upper cover portion,

said upper cover portion having a central cover portion and a perimeter portion located radially outwardly from said central cover portion, said perimeter portion having a perimeter opening portion having the opening by which the person can drink from the container, said perimeter opening
5 portion comprising radially inward and radially outward wall portions, each having a substantial vertical alignment component, said opening being positioned between said radially inward and outward wall portions, said perimeter opening portion further comprising an adjacent surrounding surface region adjacent to and extending around said opening and
10 comprising radially inward and outward adjacent surrounding surface regions that are radially inward and outward of said opening, and lateral adjacent surrounding surface region portions located laterally of said opening, said cover piece comprising:

a cover section comprising a covering portion and a surrounding
15 cover portion extending around the covering portion, said cover piece being configured so that in a covering position covering said opening, where said covering portion is located over said opening and said surrounding cover portion is located over said adjacent surrounding surface region, said
20 cover piece having a lower surface adhesive layer at least at said surrounding cover portion;

a tab section being arranged to extend outwardly from said cover section so that with the cover piece in the covering position said tab section is positioned to be manually grasped by a
25 person;

said cover piece being characterized in having a flexural stiffness where the deflection value thereof is less than 1.2 inches and yet is sufficiently stiff so that the cover piece is able to be held by opposite edge portions between a person's thumb

and finger and placed over said opening while being held
between the thumb and the finger;

said cover piece being further characterized in that in its covering
position the cover piece has radially inward and outward
5 surrounding cover portions located, respectively, radially
inwardly and outwardly of said opening, and lateral
surrounding cover portions extending laterally along said
perimeter opening portion, said cover section being arranged
so that with the cover piece in the covering position, the
10 lateral portions of the surrounding cover portion extend from
the covering portion a substantially greater distance than the
distance which either of said radially inward and outward
surrounding surface portions extend from the opening;

said cover piece being also characterized in that said tab section
15 extends outwardly from the radially outward surrounding
portion of said cover piece, so that with the cover piece in its
covering position, the tab section extends beyond said
outward wall portion, and said radially inward cover portion
has a radially inward edge which, with the cover piece in the
20 covering position, is closely adjacent to an upper edge of
said radially inward wall portion, whereby said cover piece
can be located relative to said opening by positioning said
radially inward edge of the inward cover portion adjacent to
the upper edge of the radially inward wall portion.

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18. A cover piece particularly adapted for use with a drinking
container, to cover an opening of the drinking container by which a person
can drink from the container, where said container has a lower end portion
and an upper end portion, which comprises an upper cover portion, said
30 upper cover portion having a central cover portion and a perimeter portion

located radially outwardly from said central cover portion, said perimeter portion having a perimeter opening portion having the opening by which the person can drink from the container, said perimeter opening portion comprising radially inward and radially outward wall portions, each having
5 a substantial vertical alignment component, said opening being positioned between said radially inward and outward wall portions, said perimeter opening portion further comprising an adjacent surrounding surface region adjacent to and extending around said opening and comprising radially inward and outward adjacent surrounding surface regions that are radially
10 inward and outward of said opening, and lateral adjacent surrounding surface region portions located laterally of said opening, said cover piece comprising:

a cover section comprising a covering portion and a surrounding cover portion extending around the covering portion, said
15 cover piece being configured so that in a covering position covering said opening, said covering portion is located over said opening and said surrounding cover portion is located over said adjacent surrounding surface region, said cover piece having a lower surface adhesive layer at least at said
20 surrounding cover portion;

a tab section being arranged to extend outwardly from said cover section so that with the cover piece in the covering position said tab section is positioned to be manually grasped by a person;

25 said cover piece being characterized in having a flexural stiffness where the deflection value thereof is less than 1.2 inches and yet is sufficiently stiff so that the cover piece is able to be held by opposite edge portions between a person's thumb and finger and placed over said opening while being held
30 between the thumb and the finger;

said cover piece being arranged so that a radially inward edge of the radially inward wall portion has a substantially straight-line configuration, with at most a moderate curve, and a radially inward edge of the radially inward cover portion has an alignment closely aligned therewith, said surrounding cover portion comprising a radially inward cover portion and a radially outward cover portion and oppositely positioned lateral cover portions, said lateral cover portions of said surrounding cover portion extending from the covering portion a substantially greater distance than a distance which said inner and outer cover portions extend from said covering portion.

19. The cover piece as recited in claim 18, wherein said cover piece has a radial axis which extends radially through said cover piece when the cover piece is in its covering position, and a perimeter axis perpendicular to the radial axis, said covering portion having a lateral dimension through said lateral cover portions which is substantially greater than a radial dimension extending between said radially inward and radially outward cover portions, and said cover piece is particularly adapted to cover an opening having a circumferential alignment dimension substantially greater than a radial with dimension thereof.

20. The cover piece as recited in claim 19, wherein said tab section is positioned, with the cover piece in its covering position, to extend radially outwardly from a center location relative to said perimeter axis, said tab section having a radially outward edge portion which is generally centered along said radial axis, whereby said cover piece can be conveniently grasped and maneuvered by grasping the radially outward tab edge portion and the radially inward edge of the radially inward cover

portion between a person's thumb and finger, and the cover piece can be properly aligned by the person tactile engagement with the radially inward edge of the radially inward wall portion.